

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 15, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
192 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
Chairman  
House Agriculture Committee  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
House Agriculture Committee  
305 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Stabenow and Lucas and Ranking Members Cochran and Peterson:

As you conference the Farm Bill, we write to reaffirm our support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), our country's most critical anti-hunger program. As we wrote to Speaker Boehner in an August 13, 2013 letter signed by all Democratic Members and Delegates of the U.S. House of Representatives- "Given the essential nature of [SNAP] to millions of American families, the final language of the Farm Bill or any other legislation related to SNAP must be crafted to ensure that we do not increase hunger in America."

Regardless of the negotiations on the Farm Bill, beginning on November 1, 2013 every SNAP enrollee already saw a reduction in benefits. The cut equates to \$29 per month for a family of three or a loss of 16 meals a month. Moreover, this reduction in benefits represents a \$5 billion cut to SNAP in Fiscal Year 2014 alone and an \$11 billion cut through Fiscal Year 2016.

Particularly given this cut, we continue to strongly believe the final language of the Farm Bill must be crafted to ensure that we do not further increase hunger in America. And we are not alone as religious, nutrition, education, health care and other advocates agree we should not increase hunger in the Farm Bill.

Outlined below are several policy changes that will do just that. As such, we urge you to ensure that these policies are not in the final legislation recommended by the conference committee.

As you know, 40 States have implemented categorical eligibility in order to simplify and streamline program administration to align SNAP eligibility rules with other means-tested programs, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), repealing categorical eligibility would eliminate food

assistance to 1.8 million low-income people. Furthermore, CBO projects 280,000 children in families whose eligibility for free school meals is tied to their SNAP benefit would lose access to these meals if the House's proposed elimination of categorical eligibility became law.

Language in the House passed Farm Bill would also eliminate the option for states in areas of high unemployment to request a temporary waiver for an exemption from the three month SNAP benefit cap and allow states to end SNAP benefits for adults, as well as their families including children, if they are not working or participating in a training program for at least 20 hours a week. If this policy were to become law, millions of low income adults and children, some of the poorest in our nation, would lose access to the benefits they need to prevent them from going hungry.

Finally, both the House and Senate bills would modify the relationship between the SNAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a program that Americans in 15 states across the country use to help afford their energy costs. This change would eliminate a state's ability to streamline calculation of SNAP benefits and reduce SNAP benefits by an average of roughly \$90 per month for hundreds of thousands of households. Eighty-two percent of SNAP households that claim a SUA have gross incomes below the poverty line and are disproportionately made up of low-income seniors, working poor families with children, and individuals with disabilities.

SNAP is helping more than 47 million Americans meet their basic food needs at a time when more than 50 million Americans face the threat of food insecurity. The Farm Bill conference should not increase the hardship of those Americans by making draconian cuts to SNAP.

Sincerely,



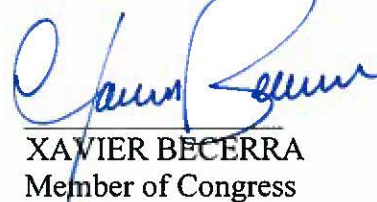
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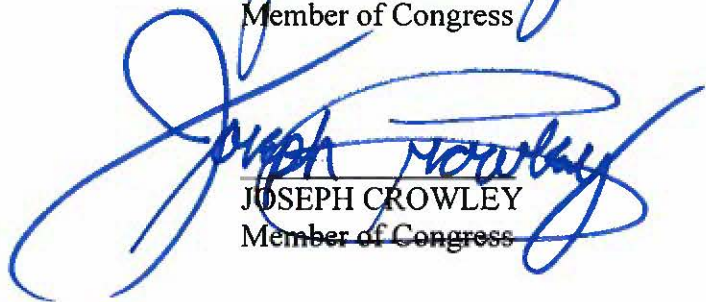
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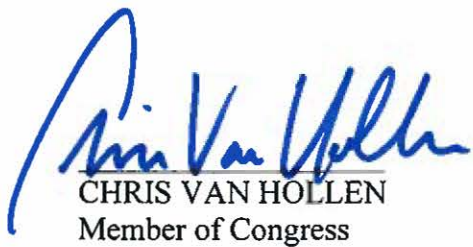


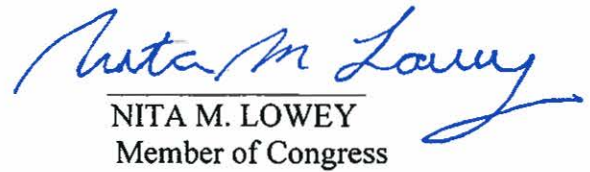
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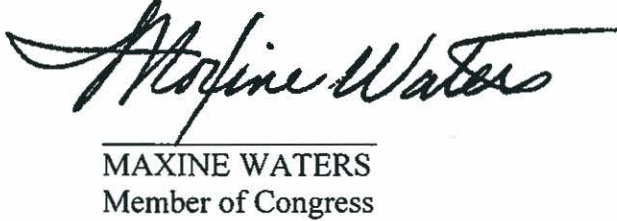


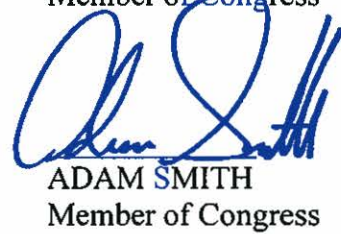
  
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